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ABSTRACT

This module on promoting leisure is intended to give an understanding of the methods that can be used to market leisure products and services and how to plan the marketing of leisure. The material is presented in a self-instructional format in seven sections. At the beginning of each section is a statement of the objectives that will be achieved as a result of working through the material that follows. Users of the module are asked to relate information given in the text to their own experience and knowledge. Where appropriate, suggested solutions to these questions are given on the opposite or following page. The seven sections cover the following: (1) the leisure customer; (2) the leisure product; (3) customer communications; (4) direct marketing; (5) sales promotion; (6) customer relations; and (7) marketing planning. (YLB)

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OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Leisure Management
MODULE

PROMOTING LEISURE

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

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This self-study unit has been written by Anthony Wright, with additions and amendments by Anne Newmark. It incorporates material prepared by Marjorie Wright and her colleagues at Bournemouth Polytechnic (previously Dorset Institute of Higher Education), in particular the case studies in Sections 1, 2 and 7.

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PROMOTING LEISURE

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HOW TO USE THIS UNIT

The material in *Promoting Leisure* builds on and consolidates the work covered in the companion HCTC self-study units: *The Leisure Experience* and *The Leisure Operation*.

Promoting Leisure is divided into seven sections. At the start of each section is a statement of the objectives you will be able to achieve by working through the material that follows.

From time to time you will be asked to relate information given in the text to your own experience and knowledge. Space is provided below these activities for you to write your answers. Where appropriate, suggested solutions to the questions are given on the opposite or following page.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of *Promoting Leisure* is to give you an understanding of:

- the methods that can be used to market leisure products and services
- how to plan the marketing of leisure.

After completing the unit, you will be able to decide which marketing methods are most suitable for your particular leisure business. You will know also how to plan an effective marketing campaign that will achieve your business objectives.

SECTION 1
The leisure customer

After completing this section you will be able to:

- define marketing
- describe and classify customers as an essential basis for marketing planning
- identify what influences leisure customers' choice
- undertake simple market research to establish a clearer picture of customers' attitudes and needs.

DEFINITION OF MARKETING

'Marketing' is defined as:

> 'The process of identifying and satisfying customer wants and needs – at a profit'.

The 'marketing approach' means thinking about the production and distribution of goods and services from the customers' point of view. What you have to ask yourself is:

> 'What do they, the customers, want to buy?'

rather than:

> 'What do I, the supplier, want to sell?'

This principle is illustrated by the story of Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, who was asked how many colours Ford customers could choose from. 'They can have any colour, as long as it's black' was his reply. Henry Ford was able to stick to black because Ford was the only cheap car on the market. There was no competition and customers had no choice.

However, the leisure market today is highly competitive and customers have a wide range of choice. They can choose between different hotels, holidays, leisure activities or attractions, or they can stay at home in their leisure time, and watch TV and videos, or simply spend their money on non-leisure items like a new fridge or an item of furniture.

Go back to the definition of marketing:

> 'The process of identifying and satisfying customer wants and needs – at a profit.'

It follows from this that planning a sound marketing campaign is a process of:

- investigation
- analysis
- planning.

To *investigate* you need to ask yourself:

1. Who are you selling to?

To *analyse*, begin by asking:

2. What do the customers want and have you got it?

3. What do you charge for it?

To *plan*, consider:

4. What do you need to say about it?

5. How do you say it?

6. Where do you say it?

7. How much should you spend on saying it?

This is the basic checklist of questions with which the marketing process begins. In order to answer these, you will need to use some terminology peculiar to marketing. Pause now to consider what you mean when you use the following terms:

1. customer

2. market, target market

3. product.

> The term 'product' was traditionally used to refer to something manufactured, like a tube of toothpaste, while anything involving personal contact, like serving a drink or a meal, was called a 'service'. For the purpose of marketing planning it is convenient to use the word 'product' generally to cover whatever you are selling, because the same marketing principles apply.

CUSTOMER TYPES

The marketing approach to business puts the customer in the 'driving seat', so you need to develop a further dimension to your 'customer awareness'.

The 'market' is made up of different types of customers whose requirements are different. Not all customers for one particular 'product' are the same 'type'. Analysing your existing market and identifying the various customer types within that market is the first key step in the development of customer awareness. This process is called 'market segmentation'. (This is also covered in the companion self-study unit *The Leisure Experience*, and in *Customer Care Management*.)

Consider, for example, a city-centre hotel and the different types of customer for that product. During the period September to May the main weekday customers will be business people, whereas at weekends customers may be couples taking a short break holiday. During the summer months there could be a lot of foreign tourists. If you were involved in the running of such an establishment you would already be sensitive to the different needs of each group, and you would find it easy to identify the basic factors which distinguish one group from another, such as:

- age
- sex
- with, or without a partner
- number and age of children
- home address
- occupation, and, by inference, income bracket.

This information provides a basic customer profile, useful for describing and selecting target groups for leisure 'products'. Each group has identifiably different requirements which can be matched with correspondingly different products, and which will necessitate a different marketing approach.

So, for example, if you were marketing holidays at a holiday centre, such as Butlins or Pontins, your target group ('target market') would be customers with the following profile:

- age 28 to 45 years
- with partner
- with children
- living in towns and cities
- working in supervisory or clerical, junior managerial and skilled manual occupations.

You can build up such basic customer profiles from information in hotel registration forms and club membership records. By extracting these facts from such a source, you will get a feeling for the other questions that you need to ask about your customers in order to classify them and create a clearer picture of your target market.

In the Butlins/Pontins example, these additional questions might include the following:

- date of visit
- length of visit
- type of accommodation booked
- how the booking was made, either direct or through a travel agent
- how the customer got to know about the centre
- which TV channel watched regularly
- which newspapers read regularly.

This sort of information on customer types will also help in the following types of situation:

1. A new type of holiday package to be promoted to:
   - existing customers
   - new markets.
2. A drop in sales of the holiday package.
3. An anticipated quiet period in the centre.
4. Seasonal promotion to maintain business.

Here is one example:

Suppose the centre were short of bookings for May and June. What type of customer normally books for those months? You might find that they are older couples without children who read the Sunday Express. An advertisement in the Sunday Express, perhaps carrying a special offer, could produce the bookings that you need.

From the brief description overleaf of The Moonfleet Manor (one of the case studies used in The Leisure Experience*), list on the space on page 9 what the main customer types targeted over the years have been. Also consider whether there are any obvious new markets.*

Case Study: Moonfleet Manor, Weymouth

Moonfleet Manor enjoys a secluded position with fine views of the sea and Chesil Beach, a nature reserve. The area is well known for its many beauty spots and tourist attractions, including Abbotsbury Swannery. The hotel, 8 miles from Weymouth, is a little difficult to find, so there is not much passing trade.

The hotel has its origins as far back as 1564, when it was known as Fleet House, the seat of the Mohun family. Later it featured in the classic children's book 'Moonfleet' by J Meade Faulkner - a story of smuggling and adventure. The summer house referred to in the book stands in the hotel grounds to this day, and full advantage was taken of the Moonfleet connection when the book was serialised on TV.

In 1971 when Jan and Bruce Hemingway bought the Moonfleet, only 5 rooms had private bathrooms. The only leisure facilities were an outdoor swimming pool and a ballroom. By 1973 The Moonfleet had become one of the first hotels in Britain to have its own squash courts. Advertisements in the newly launched squash magazines brought groups from Surrey and Berkshire for the weekends. (The connection with these two counties has been kept up ever since.) Write-ups appeared in Canadian squash magazines advertising 'Moonfleet Weekends'.

In 1975 the cellar bar was re-vamped and changed into a discotheque. The following year a hard tennis court was built and a snooker table installed in a spare room in the cellar. Later this was moved upstairs.

The demand for rooms encouraged the Hemingways to extend the hotel in 1977, adding 11 new bedrooms, all with private bathrooms, a new 100-seater restaurant, and move and upgrade the kitchen.

The arrival of a daughter in the Hemingway family in 1978, led them to focus attention on children, updating the family rooms to include full-sized bunks. Room listening devices were installed, and early suppers offered. And there can't be too many hotels in Britain where Father Christmas (in the guise of Bruce Hemingway) actually descends the chimney, to the delight of the children staying in the hotel on the special Christmas package. A leading monthly journal placed the Moonfleet in the top 11 out of around 300 hotels included in its 'Family Welcome Guide'.

In 1979/80 all the first floor rooms were given private bathrooms, a conference room created in the centre well of the hotel, capable of holding 50 people, and an adventure playground, inspired and partly created by various members of staff, built in the small wood in the hotel grounds.

In 1983/4 the Blue Lagoon Leisure Club was evolved. By this time the outdoor pool had become three separate indoor pools, both for fun and serious swimming, and there was a sauna and sunbeds. A year later a multi-gym was added. Annual membership to the leisure club was a very modest £45, giving members full access to the facilities hotel guests could enjoy.

The reception area was improved in 1987 and four of the ground floor bedrooms were converted to two superior rooms, each with a small kitchen so they could be used for mini-conferences. One of the new rooms was designed and equipped to be suitable for the disabled.

Responsibility for the pooi was handed over to the newly appointed manager of the Leisure Club. Club membership was developed, swimming lessons and keep fit classes were provided.

MAIN CUSTOMER TYPES

POSSIBLE NEW MARKETS

The main market segments targeted by the Hemingways over the years have been:

- those interested in specific sports both locally and nationally
- families with children
- nature and country lovers
- younger local population for the disco
- local residents for the leisure club facilities
- companies for conferences

A new market to target would be the active older generation. Also perhaps ornithologists for organised bird watching weekends.

CUSTOMER MOTIVATION

In general, leisure choice is determined by what people get out of an activity, or holiday ('benefit'), and what they have to put into it ('cost'). (This was dealt with in more depth in *The Leisure Experience*.)

To take the example of retired people, the 'benefits' of leisure activity are generally perceived to be:

- fun and interest (relief from boredom)
- fitness and the maintaining of health, good looks and mobility
- social interest and contacts (to counter loneliness)
- relaxation.

The 'costs' will include:

- the time that will be taken
- the physical and mental effort which will be required
- the financial cost – which will depend on the amount of disposable income available.

In the case of retired people, golf provides social contact and helps to maintain health and mobility. Retired people have the necessary time for the game, which does not require great physical strength or effort. Obviously it does not follow that all retired people want to play golf, or that all golf club members are retired, but that retired people are more likely to feel that they can justify and afford the cost of golf club membership.

Remember the question:

'What do the customers want and have you got it?'

You need to know the answers so that you can design products and services that meet customers' needs and that will sell successfully.

Remind yourself of the Haven Sports and Leisure Centre (one of the case studies in The Leisure Operation.*) In the space on page 13, note the main customer group, make a list of the benefits the leisure centre offers those customers, and what other benefits, facilities and services you recommend the management consider offering them.*

Case Study: The Haven Sports and Leisure Centre

The Haven Hotel at Sandbanks, Poole, is in an idyllic location, right at the edge of the sea, overlooking Brownsea Island and the Purbeck Hills.

Use of the leisure centre with its unusual linked outdoor and indoor swimming pools is free for hotel guests, with the exception of the squash and sunbeds. Club membership entitles local residents to full use of all the hotel's facilities including the magnificent sun lounge with its superb sea views. Members tend to be aged 40 years and over: Sandbanks is a very expensive residential area, and the club is regarded as 'up-market'. Many of the hotel guests are a similar age. Children are allowed to use the club facilities, but not after 5 pm.

The indoor pool is heated to 29 degrees Celsius, and the outdoor pool, which is also kept open throughout the year, to 26 degrees. At night time the outdoor pool is covered with a thermal cover. There were plans to put a dome over the pool, but the majority of members said they preferred it to remain open air. Other facilities include a glass-backed squash court, attractive spa pools with a rain shower and jet stream, gymnasium, solarium, sauna, steam room and leisure centre bar (for soft drinks, although it does have a liquor licence). All the floors in the centre have non-slip surfaces.

The centre originally included a games room, but this was not particularly popular so the (hired) equipment was returned and the space used to double the size of the gym. The squash court is under-used by members. Squash leagues were tried, but only ten players joined up. The court is now also used for aerobics, yoga, circuit and internal training and racquetball.

People are not allowed to use the weights room unsupervised, unless they are known to be competent by the staff. The previous manager screened new members by asking the following questions:

- *When did you last participate in any sports?*
- *What do you hope to achieve?*
- *How often could you commit yourself to attending the centre?*
- *Are you suffering from, or recently suffered from any medical problems?*
- *Are you under medication, or recently completed a course of medication?*
- *Do you know of any reason why you should not use the equipment?*
- *Do you smoke, or drink alcohol?*
- *Is your job stressful?*
- *What type of life-style do you lead?*

The screening process also includes a fitness test and the person's blood pressure is taken. If the manager was not happy with any aspect of the application, a letter was requested from the person's doctor to confirm that he or she is fit enough to participate.

There is a waiting list for membership. The names of members who renew their membership promptly goes into a draw: the winner gets free membership for the next year.

The leisure centre is deemed to be a success. It has helped generate business for the hotel, the conference market has improved and the hotel is trying to develop its short breaks market. But competition in the area is increasing, with other hotels adding leisure facilities.

MAIN CUSTOMER GROUP

BENEFITS OFFERED MAIN CUSTOMER GROUP

OTHER BENEFITS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES WHICH MANAGEMENT SHOULD CONSIDER OFFERING TO THIS CUSTOMER GROUP

MAIN CUSTOMER GROUP

The older client

BENEFITS OFFERED MAIN CUSTOMER GROUP

- heated spa pools
- heated outdoor pool
- club atmosphere, which makes an ideal meeting place
- access to the hotel's facilities including the sun lounge
- non-slip surfaces on the floors

OTHER BENEFITS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES WHICH MANAGEMENT SHOULD CONSIDER OFFERING TO THIS CUSTOMER GROUP

- equip gym with machines which are comfortable for older people to use
- train staff to have a special awareness of the needs of the older generation, employ older staff, more in sympathy with the clientele
- install a beauty salon: this is likely to be appreciated by women who have the time and money available to enjoy it
- offer special classes for the over 40s, 50s and 60s in the gym to include swimming, aerobics and yoga
- reserve certain times for use of the leisure centre by older people only
- establish a referral procedure with doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractors and osteopaths, for members to visit when worried about their health
- tighten control on fitness assessment
- try to encourage older people not to feel too inhibited about going to a leisure centre, and play down the emphasis on the 'body beautiful'
- organise bridge and other card games to encourage members to associate themselves more with activities in the centre
- emphasise the social rather than the physical

To establish the specific benefits that customers want, you have to ask them direct. Prepare for this by thinking about what you would want if you were a customer yourself, for a particular product. But be careful not to assume that you are an average person, with typical views and needs. That could be misleading.

Imagine that you personally are planning a weekend break in the country. Write down below the factors that would determine your choice of accommodation.

Your answer may have included the following:

- price
- travelling time
- local scenery and attractions
- availability of rooms with bath
- standard of restaurant

This is a basic list and you may have been much more choosy, including swimming pool, tennis court and four-poster bed in your list of requirements! Such specifics would relate to the personal tastes of the individual.

Now think about the needs of a couple with two small children and list below what you consider to be the main factors affecting their choice of holiday accommodation.

Your answer may have included the following:

- Entertainment and catering facilities
  - children's play and entertainment facilities
  - children's games supervisors
  - indoor entertainment
  - evening child-minding or child-listening service
  - on-site evening entertainment for adults
  - children's meal menus
- Accommodation
  - self-catering, alternative
- Journey time
  - maximum 2 hours' drive
- Price and value
  - children's and family discounts

MARKET RESEARCH

Unknowns and uncertainties create an element of risk when you make business decisions. The results of the last exercise illustrate the scope for unknowns and uncertainties in attempting to identify the requirements of broadly defined customer groups and match them to your particular products. Market research helps to reduce the risk by providing independent, quantified information about the requirements, the attitudes and the tastes of your customers.

The key factors about their requirements, such as:

- who are the customers (age, sex)
- who is in their group
- what is their occupation
- where do they live
- when do they visit
- when do they decide to visit
- how do they travel
- how often have they been before
- why do they visit – for business or pleasure
- how long do they stay
- how much do they spend
- what are their needs

are available from careful and considered examination of existing records. Well-designed hotel registration forms and membership applications, for example, can give a lot of information about your customers in a cost effective way.

To refine the profile of your customer, the next step is to contact the representative body for your sector of the leisure industry, which may have done customer surveys. Similarly, your regional tourist board may have relevant information about tourist visitors to the area.

List below the information about your customers that is available from customer records and statistics.

Contact the appropriate representative body/bodies for your type of operation and make a note below of the customer research data it/they could make available to you, and the cost.

The next stage in refining your customer profile is, of course, to talk to and seek the views of the customers themselves, and this involves carrying out a survey. Surveys can be conducted by interviewing customers personally, or by means of questionnaires which can be left in bedrooms, at reception desks or sent through the post.

One of the simplest ways of finding out about customer attitudes and needs is through informal discussion in the bar or at reception. Most people like to 'air their views' and are pleased to be asked. Try to select a cross-section of customers for this 'personal interview' and be careful not to draw definite conclusions from a small sample of people whose views may not be generally representative.

For more comprehensive and reliable information from your customers, you need to carry out a formal survey, and before you embark on this course of action, it is essential to give careful thought to the questions asked and which customers you question – in other words, the survey sample.

Questions asked should relate solely to key topics on which practical action can be taken. Self completion questionnaires, that is, the type that survey respondents fill in themselves, need to be kept short and simple.

'Designing the survey sample' is the technical term for deciding which customers should be questioned. The key principle here is that the sample should be a typical cross-section of all customers. If 50% of your customers are single people aged between 15 and 25 years, then 50% of the sample members should be single and between 15 and 25.

There is an old research saying 'There are lies, damn lies and statistics'. Because surveys are based on a sample of customers the results are subject to error. The size of error varies and can be calculated statistically. All you need to remember is that small percentage differences are unlikely to be significant. For example, if a leisure centre survey reported that 10% of weekend visitors thought the facilities for picnicking were excellent compared with 8% of weekday customers, then it's unlikely that there was a real difference in the attitudes of the two groups.

Complete the International Hotel customer survey on the assumption you have been a guest of the hotel. Then on pages 22 and 23, draft a questionnaire that would be appropriate for a survey of your own customers, taking account of any weaknesses you found with the International Hotel survey.

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL
Main Street, Cardiff

CUSTOMER SURVEY

To help us improve our service, we would be grateful if you would spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire. Simply place a tick in the appropriate box, or write your comments in the space provided.

1. What was the date of your arrival at the International Hotel?
   ..../..../199

2. How many nights did you stay at the hotel?
   .....

3. Was this your first visit to the International Hotel?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

4. If your answer to the last question was 'No', please give the month and year of your last visit to the International Hotel:
   Month ..... Year .....

5. What was the main purpose of the trip during which you visited the hotel:
   Business ☐ Holiday ☐ Visiting friends and relatives ☐
   Other (please specify)
   .....

6. During your trip to South Wales did you stay at the International Hotel only?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

7. If your answer to the last question was 'No', please state in which other hotels or other type of accommodation establishment you stayed:
   Name ..... Location .....
   Name ..... Location .....
   Name ..... Location .....

8. Thinking about your visit to the International Hotel generally, were you:
   very satisfied ☐ fairly satisfied ☐
   slightly dissatisfied ☐ very dissatisfied ☐

9. Please rate the following aspects of the International Hotel:

	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Accommodation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leisure facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service	☐	☐	☐	☐
Value for money	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please indicate which of the following facilities you used during your stay at the International Hotel:

Swimming pool	☐	Sauna	☐
Gymnasium	☐	Glamorgan Bar	☐
Cocktail Bar	☐	Coffee Shop	☐
Restaurant: midday meal	☐	Restaurant: evening meal	☐

11. Do you have any suggestions for changes at the International Hotel or the way it is run? Please specify:

.....

12. Please indicate how many adults including yourself there were in your party:

1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 or more ___

13. Please indicate how many children (under 15 years of age) there were in your party:

None ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 or more ___

14. How did you first hear about the International Hotel:

by word of mouth ☐ newspaper advertisement ☐

town guide ☐ other sources (please specify):

.....

15. Which daily newspaper(s) do you read regularly? Please specify:

.....

16. Which Sunday newspaper(s) do you read regularly? Please specify:

.....

17. Which town do you live in nearest to? (or country for overseas visitors)

Town..... Post code..... Country.....

18. What is the occupation of each of the adult members of your household? Please specify:

.....

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Some hints for questionnaire design

- Keep questions brief. Use simple English.
- Always have an introduction (or accompany by a covering letter or message): 'We would like to give you an opportunity to help us make the leisure centre better...'
- Make the question sequence logical. Initial questions should be straightforward and interesting. Leave any difficult or sensitive questions to the end of the questionnaire.
- Use checklists for complicated questions, such as a range of sports, or activities on offer at the leisure centre.
- Don't use leading questions such as 'What do you dislike about the pool?' This assumes the person dislikes the pool in the first place.
- Avoid open ended questions such as 'What facilities did you use during your stay?'
- The questionnaire should be well presented to reflect the standards of your establishment.
- Consider how the completed questionnaire will be analysed. Code boxes in the margin will make data preparation and analysis easier.
- Always pilot the questionnaire to iron out any flaws in the design before it is too late.

This completes Section 1. The next section deals with the methods of analysing your product.

SECTION 2
The leisure product

After completing this section you will be able to:

- evaluate your leisure products in terms of their strengths and weaknesses
- identify the opportunities available and the threats facing them
- differentiate your products from those of competitors
- explain the factors to be taken into account when setting prices.

First remind yourself of the term 'product', used in marketing terminology to refer to whatever is being sold, whether this is an item or a service, because the same marketing principles apply.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS

Carrying out 'SWOT analysis' is a method by which you can check the customer appeal of your leisure product and begin to gauge its competitive strength, with a view of developing your product to take full advantage of every marketing opportunity.

SWOT stands for:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

and all these must be viewed from the customer perspective.

> In this context an 'Opportunity' is a marketing opportunity, such as the identification of a group of people at whom the product could be effectively targeted, or the development of a particular aspect of the product to appeal to a certain sector of the market.

Two examples of a SWOT analysis

	SMALL COUNTRY HOTEL	FAMILY-OPERATED CITY-CENTRE ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Strengths	Peace and quiet Beautiful scenery Home cooking Personal welcome Lower price than city hotels	Distinctive identity Personal service Quality of menus and cooking Flexibility of opening hours
Weaknesses	No entertainment Not all rooms with bath	Limited customer franchise Limited marketing resources
Opportunities	Increase in activity holidays Weekend break customers Businesswomen	Strengthen identity and trade up by developing distinctive style and menus Use personal service to create a loyal customer franchise, increase frequency of use and get referrals Develop products which exploit the strengths of personal service and flexibility, for instance anniversary dinners, theatre suppers
Threats	Cheap farmhouse accommodation Bed and breakfast guesthouses	'Themed' fast food restaurant chains Price competition from 'ethnic' restaurants

The SWOT analysis for the hotel has identified the increasing numbers of businesswomen as an 'opportunity', because they would be attracted by the personal welcome, the type of service and atmosphere, home cooking, and perhaps low prices. However, they might insist on en suite bathrooms. This should lead the owners to consider whether they have enough rooms with en suite bathrooms to meet the needs of the market they are trying to encourage.

The analysis has also identified weekend break customers as an 'opportunity'. Can a weekend break 'package' be effectively marketed alongside campaigns to attract businesswomen and people looking for activity holidays?

Imagine that you are the manager in the following case study and have to deal with the potential threat of a new multi-purpose leisure centre which is due to open shortly, less than 4 miles away, in Bournemouth.

Case Study: Two Riversmeet Leisure Centre, Christchurch

Christchurch is an attractive small town on the edge of the New Forest and close to the resort towns of Bournemouth and Poole. The population of around 42,000 includes a high proportion of retired people.

Christchurch lies between the rivers Avon and Stour, hence the name Two Riversmeet. Situated on a spacious site, the leisure centre's facilities include an 18 hole golf course, a 25 m, six lane swimming pool with a patio area where tables and seats are provided for relaxing, a teaching pool, sports hall, 4 squash courts, weights room, combat room for martial arts, large gallery and hall, solarium, bar cafeteria and large car park.

The centre, which is regarded as somewhat of a showpiece of local authority enterprise, is run on the basis of a maximum annual deficit of £75,000. With an unavoidable loss of £120,000 on the pool, the centre must therefore raise around £45,000 per annum. So the aim is to make a profit on as many activities as possible, while meeting the wider needs of the local community, including the disadvantaged.

The deputy manager receives a bonus if the deficit level is met. The manager's contract of employment can be terminated if the deficit is exceeded.

Two Riversmeet is open 7 days a week every day of the year except Christmas, from 6 am to 10.30 pm. Standards of safety are very high. There is a staff of 86, some of whom are part-time. A training scheme is run every week for staff. All the pool staff have the Bronze Medallion for life saving and the pool's own medal. There are 5 qualified first aiders, at least one of whom is on duty at any time. Some staff have weight training qualifications, some badminton qualifications, some are qualified at coaching squash or trampolining, others have specialist skills such as racquet re-stringing.

70% of the centre's users come from the Christchurch area, but for certain facilities such as trampolining the catchment area is much wider. Riversmeet has formed good relationships with local language schools who use the facilities on a regular basis. A ladies recreation morning is held three days a week with free crèche facilities. There is a 'Swinging 50s Club' for people who are over 50 years of age to participate in golf, badminton, pool, squash, table tennis and swimming – all for less than £1 per day. There are also swimming sessions for the disabled.

The pool is very quiet during the winter months, but in the peak summer periods numbers have to be limited. When this happens staff try to interest visitors in other sports so that they are not disappointed if they are not allowed access to the pool.

Prices are kept as low as possible – lower than other centres in Ringwood and New Milton. This results in more people coming through the door, generating more income in the long run. The local authority allows management to set prices.

In return for paying a small membership fee, people can book badminton and squash courts in advance, and enter the centre free if they just wish to spectate.

Various charity events are held at the centre (in aid of the Children in Need Appeal, for example). A consequence of the good rapport management enjoys with staff, is that staff will sometimes volunteer to work without pay for a charity event, through the night if required.

The wet changing rooms at the centre, considered to be poor, are to be revamped at a cost of £17,000, of which the local authority will contribute £10,000. Other projects waiting approval include:

- *running track and a mini-athletics complex*
- *ancillary hall of 12 x 12 m*
- *19th green bar overlooking the golf course*
- *2 new squash courts.*

The opening hours of the bar cafeteria have recently been extended and there are plans to improve the menu.

On the basis of what you have just read, do a SWOT analysis for Two Riversmeet, then briefly describe how you could capitalise on the strengths of the centre, and improve on its weaknesses, so that you maximise use of the facilities and cope with the potential threat(s).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Good location	Wet changing rooms
Spacious car park	Limited catering
Co-operative, well trained staff	Overcrowding in pool
Forward-looking local authority	
Multi-facilities	
Low prices	
Relationship with local language schools	
Favourable local image as a result of work for charities	
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Room for expansion	The new Littledown Leisure Centre
Growing local population	Lack of security with manager's job
Able to fulfil the needs of the growing elderly population with present facilities	
Thriving tourist market, locally and from nearby resorts	

Your plans might include:

- conducting research into your market and your customers to ensure that you are providing the best and most suitable facilities for them
- mounting a publicity campaign, perhaps with a leaflet drop, just before the Littledown centre opens
- continue to monitor attendances at Two Riversmeet very closely so that you are able to tell if there is a fluctuation in the numbers once the new centre opens
- introduce customer care training for your staff
- visit the new centre to find out what is offered there, and how
- make sure you and your staff do not loose sight of the fact that you are providing for the local community as well as trying to meet a large share of the operating costs of the centre.

Now use the space below to do a SWOT analysis for your own establishment.

PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

Product differentiation means, quite simply, being different from your competitors. Being different and distinctive is key to the success of your product in a crowded market-place.

This situation can only be arrived at by objectively and systematically:

- researching the attitudes of your customers in the ways discussed in Section 1
- assessing your product in relation to the market – a SWOT analysis
- analysing your competitors' products – the threats – alongside your own.

> If you were the owner of the small country hotel referred to on page 27, you might have decided to aim at businesswomen, on the basis of the results of your SWOT analysis. To differentiate your product from other local hotels, and specifically the type of establishment which you identified as a 'Threat' (cheap farmhouse accommodation and bed and breakfast guesthouses), you could introduce special facilities to attract the businesswomen, such as hairdryers, steam irons, a copier and a fax machine for guest use.

Having completed these processes, you can then build in a competitive advantage to your product which your competitors will find hard to match. This will form the basis for a *unique selling proposition*.

A unique selling proposition, or USP in marketing terminology, is the answer to the question:

> 'Why should anyone use your leisure facility(ies) rather than any of the hundred and one competitors around?'

The answer must be that your product is more desirable. It is different from all others because it can offer what the customers want and other establishments cannot offer.

The unique selling proposition should be the basic theme of your advertising and sales messages and could perhaps be used as a company slogan.

A famous example of a USP is the Avis Car Hire slogan *We try harder*. Avis couldn't claim that it had more garages or lower prices than Hertz, the market leader; what it could claim was that because it was No 2 to Hertz, its staff worked harder to give customers better service.

Consider a city-centre health club that is aiming at senior business people and has installed office services, such as a fax machine, copier and personal computer station. Describe below what the USP would be and why, and then draft a single sentence which could be used in advertising to convey the message.

The distinctive feature or 'plus' of the city-centre health club is that it enables the busy executive to get away from the office for healthy exercise while still maintaining contact with the business and being accessible to colleagues and clients.

The USP could be expressed as:

'The club where you can keep in shape, while you keep in touch.'

Re-read the SWOT analysis you did for your own establishment. Check the claims that your competitors are making in their advertising sales literature, and note them below.

Draft below a one-sentence USP to be used in your advertising, preferably one which is a real strength for you and a weakness for your main competitor.

You have established some ways in which you can develop and refine your product to give it the edge on those of your competitors. Now look again at the results of your SWOT analysis, and consider whether there are other less obvious opportunities for opportunities!

Consider for example, facilities which you have which could be used to draw new people to your establishment for special events and occasions.

Such opportunity for a restaurant might be a 'fun night' for Valentines Day or New Years Eve, which could be advertised in advance. An opportunity for a leisure centre, holiday centre or activity holiday centre might be a disco night, using existing facilities not otherwise fully utilised at night, and thus drawing new customers into the establishment, making more people familiar with the name and the place.

Take care to ensure that all such opportunities are genuinely in tune with your operation and do not either debase your product or alienate existing sectors of your market in the attempt to attract new ones – hotel residents could be put off by pounding disco music at 3 am! Look carefully at all the facilities within your leisure establishment, such as bars, private rooms, swimming pools, crèches, sports facilities, and consider their marketing potential in this light. You might find, for example, that you have a room that would make a suitable venue for wedding receptions, or a smaller one for christening parties.

As social trends change, and the requirements of the market change, you should always be sensitive to what today's customer wants, more sensitive than your competitors, so that you can develop your product accordingly, constantly building on strengths and fighting weaknesses.

Good product development is a constant, never ending process.

PRICING

You must of course set prices at levels that will provide an adequate return on the investment in land, buildings and equipment (this was covered in *The Leisure Operation*). If you fail to make a big enough profit margin you will not be able to maintain and improve your product and increase your market share; at worst, you will not be able to keep your customers and will go out of business.

Assuming that you know the minimum you must charge in order to stay in business, the next issue to be addressed in the preparation of your marketing strategy – and one which you may already have considered as a strength or a weakness in evaluating your product alongside those of your competitors – is:

'What can you charge for your product and what will the market bear?'

When setting prices, one of the factors you have to take account of is what competitors are charging – in terms of the quality and value of the product, rather than just price. (As discussed in *The Leisure Experience*, customers are generally prepared to pay more for better value.)

Briefly summarise below how the prices at your establishment compare with competitors.

Now give the reasons for and against raising your prices by, say, 20%. Your answer should take into account the results of your SWOT analysis.

Your answer may have included the following:

FOR RAISING PRICES

- Current profit margin and return on investment too low in relation to interest rate paid on borrowed capital.
- Local competitors charging a higher price for a similar product.
- Establishment full at current prices. Demand exceeds supply.
- Customer research indicates that your product is considered superior to competition.
- You have just introduced new product features that are unique to your establishment.

FOR NOT RAISING PRICES

- Your customers are mostly local, and the local economy is depressed, with high unemployment levels.
- You are very dependent on repeat business from regular customers who will be sensitive to a big price increase.
- You want to attract new customers to fill spare capacity.
- Your customer research indicates that your product is considered very similar to competitors, so that price is a major determinant of choice.

As the number and nature of the factors listed above illustrates, decisions regarding pricing are complex. Furthermore, such decisions are not always easy to rectify if proved wrong.

Pricing decisions should never be made in isolation therefore, but only after careful assessment of all factors.

This completes Section 2. The next section deals with the question 'What do you need to say about your products?'

SECTION 3
Customer communications

After completing this section you will be able to:

- state how products are identified in the market-place and how advertising sells them
- make decisions on where to place advertisements.

CORPORATE IDENTITY

Being recognised in the market-place depends largely on having a powerful corporate identity.

The 'corporate identity' of an organisation is the set of images which identify, describe and characterise it. Very broadly, those images communicate who it is, what it does, and its position in the market.

Rolls-Royce is a good example. Whenever you see the distinctive letters RR and the statuette of the Silver Lady on the radiator you recognise a Rolls-Royce car and you know immediately what it stands for – a luxurious and comfortable car at the top end of the market. The name Rolls-Royce has become a household name, and taken on its own meaning in everyday conversation, so that one hears talk of, for example, the 'Rolls-Royce of lawn mowers', meaning the best of lawn mowers!

The readily identifiable images are mainly visual:

- colour
- shape
- design
- type style.

Consider, for example, the colour, shape, design and type style of the distinctive Harrods' logo, an international symbol of quality. Think of the Coca-Cola logo, also internationally recognised.

The impact of the visual image, when consistently used in all printed material – from stationery, brochures and direct mail leaflets, to signage – and in advertisements is considerable. Nevertheless, the corporate identity of an organisation is more than a name and a visual image selected or designed to convey a message about that organisation. The image of an organisation is reflected in many subtle ways, such as, for example, the style of the pool attendant's uniform and the manner and tone of voice used to answer customer enquiries.

A strong and powerful identity depends on clarity, unity and consistency. When you are considering the design of your advertising and promotional literature make sure that:

- the product name and sales messages are clear, easily understood and memorable
- the same design style and colours are used in all promotional material, so that you are constantly reinforcing your image in the minds of your audience
- the message is consistent.

Companies like Rolls-Royce and Coca-Cola are well-known and recognised because they have maintained a clear, consistent identity, unchanged over many years.

Review all the advertising and promotional material for your establishment. Is it clear and consistent? Are the same type styles and colours used throughout? Summarise your findings and any recommendations for change below.

Do the same exercise on a local competitor, noting your findings below and the sort of impression it has given you of the style and quality of the competitor's operation?

ADVERTISING

You can advertise your leisure product in local newspapers, national newspapers and magazines, in guides, annuals and directories, on posters, local and national radio stations, on television and even at the cinema. Whichever medium you choose, the success of your advertising will depend on sound planning, to ensure that you reach the right audience with your advertising message. Without it, even the most creative, original and powerful advertisement will fail, and if you have selected an expensive medium such as television, this could be an extremely costly mistake.

Successful advertising uses good design to attract the attention of the potential customer to a well expressed message which gives the necessary information about the product and how to respond if interested.

Your advertising must therefore be designed to:

- attract ATTENTION
- create INTEREST
- generate DESIRE
- stimulate ACTION.

The name 'AIDA' will help you to remember the list.

The first stage in the planning of any advertising campaign, however modest, is to define objectives, and you should therefore begin by asking yourself:

- Who are you advertising to? What is your target group?
- What do you want to say about the product? What are your key messages?

Remember the importance of your USP!

- How do you want to say it? What feelings do you want to create?
- What result do you want? What do you want the audience to do if they are interested? Telephone? Write for brochure/booking form/application for membership? Visit?

Suppose you are responsible for advertising a national chain of British holiday centres wanting to increase bookings for summer holidays. State below what your advertising objectives would be.

Your answer might include the following:

- Attract the attention of mass-market families with children.
- Tell them about the great family entertainment, comfortable accommodation, special facilities for children and value for money.
- Excite them with strong feelings of family fun and enjoyment.
- Prompt them to enquire for a brochure.

Assume that you are planning an advertisement for your own establishment. Taking into account the unique selling proposition you created, identify below:

THE TARGET GROUP

THE KEY MESSAGES

THE FEELINGS YOU WANT TO CREATE

THE DESIRED RESPONSE

The design of advertisements in newspapers, magazines and other printed media is best handled by a design studio, experienced in designing for the medium which you have selected.

A design studio will produce the illustrations, typography and artwork, but you should remember that what is produced will only be as good as the brief you gave at the outset. You need to be absolutely clear what you want and what input you require from the design studio. If, for example, the designer does not use your exact logo and type-style, because he or she has not been briefed to do so, the advertisement will not reinforce your corporate identity. You should be able to tell the designer precisely where the advertisement is to appear, the size of space booked, the deadlines to be met, and the form in which the advertisement material is to be supplied to the publication (for example, camera-ready artwork).

Press advertising space, radio and television air time can be bought direct or through an advertising agency. If you have a substantial advertising budget, it is almost certainly worth using an advertising agency to design your advertisements, plan and buy the media space. This enables you to benefit from their knowledge and experience of media buying, and while they will charge for design and production (generally at higher rates than small design studios), they do not charge for media buying as the agencies are paid commission by the media owners. Using an agency will save you time and spare you the potential complications of dealing with the unfamiliar details of production.

Whoever you ask to design your advertising, the quality of the brief is vital, and that depends on your clear analysis of objectives.

Scan your weekend newspapers for leisure advertisements. Use the next two pages to classify the good examples you have spotted and comment on why you think they succeeded, and to classify and comment on the bad examples. Some of the advertisements may be good (or bad) on all aspects, others may be good at attracting attention and creating an interest, for example, but fail for some reason to generate desire, and do not stimulate action.

GOOD EXAMPLES	*WHY YOU THINK THEY SUCCEEDED*
at attracting attention	
at creating interest	
at generating desire	
at stimulating action	

ADVERTISING MEDIA

The range of media available to advertisers of leisure products is wide, and your choice depends on your advertising objectives and the size of your advertising budget.

The objective of media planning is first to identify the best medium for the advertising in creative terms and thereafter to provide the maximum coverage of the target audience with the maximum frequency at the minimum cost.

Some advertising terms

Coverage The percentage of the target audience reached by a television or radio station, a newspaper, magazine or poster. The coverage provided by a newspaper, for example, reflects its circulation, readership and readership profile.

Circulation The number of copies of a publication that are sold.

Readership The number of readers, normally more than the circulation, because any one copy will be read by more than one person.

Readership profile A description of the type of people who read a particular newspaper or magazine. For example, 88% of *Financial Times* readers are from the ABC1 social groups – people in professional, managerial and supervisory occupations – compared with 24% of *Sun* readers.

Frequency The number of times that your advertisement will be seen by the target audience during the course of a campaign. Frequency depends on the number of times that an advertisement appears and, in newspaper advertising, on the duplication of readership between the newspapers used in a campaign. For example, as many readers of the *Sun* also read the *News of the World*, a campaign that includes both will achieve greater frequency or 'repetition' against a target audience of *Sun* and *News of the World* readers.

The cost of *press advertising* can be expressed in two ways:

- the cost of buying space, expressed as pounds per page or pounds per column centimetre
- the cost of readership, expressed as the page cost per thousand readers.

Say a page in the *Financial Times* costs £19,712 and it has 757,000 readers, this gives a page cost per thousand of £26. If a page in the Sun costs £23,562 but it has 11,340,000 readers, the page cost per thousand is only £2.

Information about media coverage and costs is available from BRAD – *British Rate and Data* – a comprehensive directory that is available in most libraries. Media owners – TV stations, newspapers – supply media information packs to prospective advertisers.

BAD EXAMPLES	*WHY YOU THINK THEY FAILED*
at attracting attention	
at creating interest	
at generating desire	
at stimulating action	

The basic principles of coverage, frequency, audience profile and cost apply to all media.

Consider in greater detail the advertising objectives for the national chain of holiday centres. Assume that the advertising budget is £1 million. The target group is mass-market families with children and because it is a national chain, the customer catchment area is the whole country. That means a national campaign. TV would be best for telling the audience about the great entertainment and conveying feelings of family fun. It provides wide coverage of mass market families and can achieve a high level of awareness. The holiday centre booking season extends from December through to August and the company will need to maintain a continuous 'advertising presence'. TV is expensive, so it would be used as a 'launch medium' during the first month of the campaign and limited to the TV areas containing the main centres of population with the highest concentration of mass-market families.

The 'backbone' of the campaign media schedule would be popular daily and Sunday newspapers: *Daily Mirror, Sun, News of the World, Sunday Mirror*, and *People*. These papers provide wide national coverage of mass-market families with an economical cost per thousand readers. Their style and content are appropriate for holiday advertising – they carry a lot of 'reader interest' articles about holiday locations. Large spaces would be used to create impact at the start of the campaign, followed by small, cheaper spaces to remind late bookers to enquire for a brochure or to promote late season price reductions.

Over the next few days, whenever you have an opportunity, tune in to your local TV and radio stations and make a list the of leisure products that are advertised. Also make a point of noticing any that are advertised on poster sites that you pass, and in the newspapers you and your colleagues read. Compile a list below of the products and the advertising media they use. Indicate on your list whether the leisure product concerned is advertised very frequently (VF), frequently (F), or only occasionally (O) in that media.

PRODUCT	*ADVERTISEMENT LOCATION AND FREQUENCY*			
	TV	*Radio*	*Posters*	*Newspapers*

Contact your local newspapers and ask them to send you their media packs. Assume that you are responsible for advertising the local leisure centre. Use the space below to plan a local newspaper campaign, specifying the space sizes, number of insertions and total budget.

Did you consider the following points when planning your leisure centre campaign

- The need to provide basic information about facilities, opening times, admission charges on a continuous and regular basis
- The need to promote special events
- The need to attract new customers
- Local newspaper coverage of leisure centre customers
- The price discounts available when buying a series of advertisement insertions, for example 13, 26 or 52 weeks
- The availability of special positions, for instance in the entertainments section

Taking the above points into account, your plan might include the following

- a 52-week series of small spaces, in a fixed position in the entertainments section, to provide basic information
- an allowance for occasional, larger spaces to promote special events or attract new customers
- a separate budget for posters, leaflets, guidebook advertisements, to cover potential customers, particularly young people who do not read local newspapers

This completes Section 3, and the next section looks at direct marketing.

SECTION 4
Direct marketing

After completing this section you will be able to:

define direct marketing

state the principal direct marketing techniques, and their advantages for leisure products.

'Direct marketing' is defined as any marketing activity which creates and exploits a direct relationship between a seller and an individual customer.

The purpose of direct marketing is to isolate present and prospective customers as individuals and build a continuing relationship with them.

There are four principal direct marketing techniques.

Direct response advertising This is advertising which generates enquiries or orders direct to the advertiser by including a postal address or telephone number to contact if interested in making an enquiry or purchase, or by providing a reply coupon.

Direct mail This is the practice of mailing letters and/or printed sales material to selected individuals or households. The selection process generally involves the use of address lists of enquirers and previous customers, plus lists of groups of people whom the 'seller' has in some way identified to be potential customers.

Door-to-door distribution This is the direct delivery of letters or leaflets to the occupiers of selected households.

Telephone marketing This involves telephoning to follow up enquiries, to re-contact previous enquirers and existing customers, or to make contact with potential customers.

Direct marketing has several advantages. Consider, for example the potential for developing an initial enquiry from an individual interested in your leisure product into a long-term relationship, by means of responding efficiently to that initial enquiry and thereafter sending mailings about relevant products in subsequent years with incentives to re-book or re-order.

And each of the various types of direct marketing has its particular advantages:

Direct response advertising produces measurable results. Advertisement reply coupons are coded so that advertisers can identify the enquiry source and compare the cost per enquiry for different publications. They can also compare conversion rates, that is the percentage of enquiries that are converted into an actual purchase or booking.

Being able to monitor and measure results means that it is possible to test the effectiveness not only of different publications, but of different sales messages, advertisement designs and space sizes.

Direct mail offers the key advantages of selectivity, and your promotional expenditure can thus be concentrated on the best prospects.

Suppose, for example, that you are the manager of an activity holiday centre looking for customers for autumn holidays: your records show you that your best prospects will be previous customers who have taken early and late season holidays, and perhaps couples without children. You can select the appropriate addresses from your customer files and send them a mailing with a special offer.

Door-to-door distribution must be selective to be effective. Selection is generally based on the classification of households by social and economic factors and on the theory that people with the same socio-economic background have similar tastes and buy similar products.

The Pin Point system combines Census of Population and postcode data to locate around 60 different household types.

The addresses of present customers can be analysed to establish their household types and promotional leaflets distributed in postcode areas with matching households.

Telephone marketing has a significant advantage over all other methods of direct marketing in that it offers the opportunity for two-way personal contact, which means that the seller/manager is in a strong position to establish reactions to the new product or special offer.

Telephone marketing can also be used to reinforce other methods, for example, the activity holiday centre mailshot could be followed up with telephone calls to check receipt of the mailing, make further sales points, establish reactions, and if the targeted customer is not interested in that particular product, perhaps tell the customer about another more suited to the needs and tastes of him or her.

All direct marketing depends on the skilled management and effective use of detailed information about prospects and customers. To exploit the full potential of information provided by customer records, it is vital to have and be able to use a computer, suitably programmed. Even with a small number of enquiries and customers, this makes the task of sorting and selecting names and addresses and monitoring the results of your promotions a great deal easier, more accurate and less time consuming.

The term 'database marketing' has been introduced to refer to these activities.

Personal computers with standard database programmes can be cost-effective for the smallest businesses, but be sure that you are purchasing the best system for your purposes and do not overlook the time and costs involved in learning to use such a system, staff training, and keeping it up-to-date.

Check the leisure advertisements in your weekend newspapers and note below what proportion are direct response.

Select up to six advertisements and use telephone and post to make enquiries. Note below what information you are asked for in each case, and what impressions you get from the way each enquiry is handled.

ADVERTISEMENT	*INFORMATION SOUGHT*	*HANDLING OF ENQUIRY*

Assume that you are designing a registration form for a residential leisure centre, or a membership application form. Indicate below what information you would request in order to build a marketing database.

Additional questions for a registration form might seek to establish:

- whether this is first or repeat visit
- if first visit, how the person heard about the establishment
- method of travel
- purpose of visit

and include a question along the following lines:

- Please indicate if you would like to receive details of special offers and savings on activity holidays and weekend breaks.
  Yes/No

Additional questions on a membership application form might seek to establish:

- favourite leisure pursuits of applicant and family – to guide product development
- membership of other sports and leisure clubs and associations – to guide targeting of membership recruitment promotion
- readership of specialist sports and leisure media – to guide media planning
- other leisure breaks taken during previous 12 months – to identify competition and guide product development
- names and addresses of friends who might like to receive membership details.

This completes Section 4. Planning promotional literature and briefing designers and printers are addressed in the next section.

SECTION 5
Sales promotion

WOULD I BUY THIS MYSELF?
CLEAR SIMPLE DESIGN
SELL THE SIZZLE NOT THE STEAK
ONE PICTURE IS WORTH 1000 WORDS
STIMULATE ACTION

After completing this section you will be able to:

plan promotional literature

brief designers and printers

review the use of signs and uniforms in creating a favourable first impression

state how sales promotion techniques can be used to achieve tactical marketing objectives.

PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

'Promotional literature' is the term used to describe all printed leaflets and brochures.

These are mailed to enquirers, potential customers and customers, or distributed through relevant outlets such as travel agents, tourist information centres and exhibitions. They are also used to implement direct marketing campaigns and to follow up the interest created by advertising by providing more detailed information about the product.

The production of effective promotional literature depends on sound planning and careful briefing of designers, copy-writers and printers. The preparation of a brief must begin with an analysis of your objectives, in the same way as for an advertising campaign.

Select your creative team with care. When you know the sort of publication that you want to produce, ask designers and printers to show you their portfolios of similar work, be satisfied that they understand your objectives and the standard of quality that you wish to achieve, and then ask them to quote for the job in question. If you use a big design studio, the company may be able to provide the services of a copy-writer to write the text or edit material which you provide. Designers will also be able to handle the printing for you (at a fee), or, if you wish to handle the printing yourself, they should be able to advise on both the choice of printer and the print brief.

Designers and copy-writers need to know the following before they can begin work:

- promotional objectives
- budget
- sales messages
- pictures and illustrations required
- quantities
- timing
- target market
- information to be included
- method of distribution.

You should have a clear idea of precisely what information you want the publication to convey to its readers. Only you, as client will have a grasp of what emphasis should be given to particular details (such as children's special menus or hairdryers in bedrooms!) which may be the special features which differentiate your product from the competition. You may therefore wish to write your own copy and supply the designer with this at the briefing stage. You can expect the designer to suggest some minor amendments to the copy if these are necessary for the balance of the page, and you and/or the designer may wish to enlist the support of a copy-writer to edit the text and effect the finishing touches. Remember that an effective page depends upon the interaction of good copy and good design.

The design process generally starts with a 'visual' and draft copy. A visual is a rough design, perhaps only a sketched layout, prepared by the designer in response to your brief. The designer will show you a visual to enable you to agree on the basic design idea, the 'creative concept'. In some situations, a finished visual will be necessary to give an accurate idea of the final effect, perhaps because the design is particularly important, or you need to present the idea to others, or try out the concept before it is finalised.

As the client, you have to make the final decisions on design and copy, and this is the point (when you are shown visuals) at which to ask questions and raise any worries you have about the design: changes made at a later stage can prove costly. Remember the importance of the consistency of your corporate identity. Does the proposed design fit in with and enhance the impact of your advertising and all other promotional items?

This is also the moment to examine the practicality of the designer's proposal. He or she may, for example, have heeded your brief that the colour photographs of your club dining room should be as large as possible, but if the resulting brochure is very large, there are various points to consider, such as special sized envelopes, extra postage expenses and the question of whether the package will go through a domestic letterbox unscathed!

Try to organise the production schedule so that you do not have to take any decisions without adequate time for due consideration of all factors.

Remember AIDA

Attention A distinct identity helps you to stand out from the crowd and attract attention. Go for clear, simple design.

Interest Customer benefits must be prominent and easily understood and product strengths and features highlighted. 'A picture is worth a 1000 words'. Full colour photographs are a great advantage in creating interest and atmosphere.

Desire An axiom of advertising design is 'Sell the sizzle, not the steak'. Design and copy shouldn't just describe the product, they should communicate the pleasures it provides so prospective customers can enjoy it in advance.

Action Should be stimulated by clear response prompts. Make sure that information is given very clearly about how to respond if the prospective customers want to purchase, and about the practical details of the product itself, such as times, bookings and prices.

A final golden rule: when you look at design and copy, ask yourself:

'Would I buy this myself?'

If you are quite happy with the visuals and draft copy, the next stage is finished artwork with type, photographs and illustrations. If you are leaving your designer to handle print, you should see the finished artwork before it goes to the printers, in the interests of the avoidance of expensive mistakes. Proof read very carefully.

If you are handling print yourself, you will need to draw up a specification as a basis for obtaining competitive quotes. It should include:

- size
- quantity
- number of colours
- type and weight of paper
- finishing, that is stitching, stapling, folding
- date required
- proofing schedule.

All but the last two of these points will be dictated by the design. The question of paper type and weight is one which has considerable cost implications, and you should talk to both the designer and the printer about your choice. You would be ill-advised to spend a lot of money on good design and then print on cheap, poorer quality paper, particularly if you are working with colour.

Having agreed on a quotation, the last stage before final delivery is checking the printer's proofs. This is your final opportunity to spot errors: make sure that proofs are checked very carefully as printers will not generally accept responsibility for any errors not picked up at this stage, whether they are errors that you made in the original copy, or errors introduced later by the printers. Look at every word carefully, particularly headings, captions and so forth, which many people just glance at, concentrating on the body of the copy and so missing such howlers as KEEPING THE CUSTOMERS SATISIFIED. Some people find the best way to proof read is to read the text backwards, thus overcoming the tendency to skip familiar words.

Obtain a selection of holiday brochures from your local travel agent. Decide which you find most appealing and in the space below list the reasons why.

Write out below a designer and copy-writer's brief for a leaflet promoting off-season weekend offers at a leisure operation of your choice. In this instance you are providing the copy-writer with a list of key facts, an indication of emphasis and of tone, but not draft copy.

Does your brief cover all the items listed on page 61? Just check to be sure

SIGNS AND UNIFORMS

'First impressions count'. First impressions condition customer reactions to what follows. A customer who has been well received at a leisure centre will be tolerant of changing rooms, for example that are not exactly to his or her liking. A customer who has had a bad reception is likely to be difficult. Entrance and reception signs, and porters' or receptionist's uniforms are usually the first things a customer sees on arrival at your establishment. They are key elements in the corporate identity, part of the visual imagery which characterises an organisation and the way it operates. It is vital that their colour, design and type style fit in with the 'house style'.

Signs tell customers what to do, so they must strike the right 'tone'. A grubby, scrawled sign gives the impression of a lack of concern about customers and indifference to their feelings. On the other hand, signs can be a valuable cosmetic in disguising shortcomings. For example, a holiday centre going through a refurbishment programme can reassure customers about quality and service with well-designed and informative signage.

Review the signs and uniforms in your own establishment and note below how well they fit in with your corporate identity or 'house style'.

Review the signs and uniforms in a competitive establishment. Note your initial impressions below.

In the light of these reviews, note below what action you would recommend with regard to the signs and uniforms in your own establishment.

SALES PROMOTION

A 'sales promotion' campaign is a short-term tactical scheme to give customers an incentive to buy a particular product. It is an important constituent part of a marketing campaign, but is not a substitute for long-term strategy. Like all marketing activity, effective sales promotion depends on planning and on being clear about objectives.

Typical objectives could include:

- filling gaps in booking schedules
- boosting customer numbers in off-peak hours
- launching a new service or facility
- attracting new types of customer
- obtaining enquiry 'leads' for follow-up selling.

There are three basic types of sales promotion:

Price Price reductions, extra days free, free places for children or grandparents, discounts off second holidays, free wine with meals.

Merchandise Free gifts with enquiry, order, booking or the introduction of a friend as a new customer.

Competitions – entry to which may be conditional on making an enquiry or purchase, and free prize draws – entry to which must be unconditional.

Note that prize draws must be free. If entry into the draw is conditional on making a purchase, then the draw is classed as a public lottery, which is illegal. The legality of competitions depends on them containing 'an element of skill'. If in doubt, take legal advice.

When planning a sales promotion it is important to ensure that the value of the product is not debased and that the promotion does not conflict with the product image. For example, the price-cutting of Mediterranean package holidays has debased their image as a quality product. Holiday customers now shop around for the cheapest, with little regard for differences in product and value.

For this activity, choose one of the following situations.

- *You are the manager of a quality city-centre restaurant. On weekdays you are full with business customers, but you want to increase your Sunday lunch-time trade. Describe below what type of sales promotion you would use.*
- *You are the manager of a health club which is busy in the evening and at weekends, but half-empty during weekdays. Describe below the action you would take to improve weekday business.*

CITY CENTRE RESTAURANT

Remembering that 'Your best customers are your present customers' you might have invited your weekday business clients to bring friends and family for Sunday lunch. You do not want to debase the product in their eyes, so be careful about price promotions. Rather than cut prices, add value. Perhaps flowers and champagne cocktails when you bring your partner! This would be memorable and would also boost the 'personal' image of your service.

HEALTH CLUB

Did you consider a 'member-get-member' promotion? Introduce a friend and get a free sports bag. A price-promotion could be appropriate in this case - say reduced membership fees for weekday morning and afternoon users. What about targeting those who are likely to be free during the day: active retired people and, or mothers with young children, for example.

This completes this section. Section 6 looks at the role of public relations in promoting your product, the part your staff can play, and the role of the travel trade.

SECTION 6
Customer relations

After completing this section you will be able to:

state how public relations can increase awareness of leisure products, and name the different techniques for doing this

help your staff handle enquiries and complaints, and play their part in selling your facilities

develop good relations with journalists and editors with the aim of obtaining favourable coverage in the media

identify how custom is obtained through the travel trade.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

'Public relations' is a very broad term, not easily defined, used to describe various marketing and business activities, the purpose of which is to promote an awareness of, and favourable response, to a product.

'Public relations' is generally abbreviated to 'PR', but it is useful to remember what those letters stand for: *public relations*, the relationship which you have with the public, that is your customers, your potential customers, opinion formers, the media, the competition, and many other such important groups, upon whose favourable opinion much depends.

Good relationships in any situation depend upon clear communication, understanding, sensitivity to the fears, needs and wishes of the other party. Persuading another person or group of people to think in a certain way about something, is a task which requires confidence, strong communication skills, tact, imagination, a pleasant and enthusiastic manner and also that you be well informed on the subject in question. The very same applies to 'PR'.

The aim of a public relations campaign is:

- to draw the attention of target groups, stimulate their interest in and engender a favourable response to a product through communications other than paid media.

Planning a PR campaign involves:

1. Identifying the target groups.
2. Defining the messages to communicate to each group and the attitudes to create.
3. Selecting the appropriate technique, or combination of techniques, to reach each group with the appropriate message.

PR target groups include such diverse categories as:

- the general public
- prospective customers
- local communities
- professional bodies
- special interest groups
- opinion formers
- politicians and officials
- trade organisations.

Consider the first two stages:

- *identification of the target groups*
- *definition of the messages you wish to communicate to each group.*

Suppose you were in charge of PR for a company developing a new inner-city leisure centre. Identify below at least two target groups, specifying why you feel that you might need to influence their reactions to the centre and what attitude you would be setting out to create for each.

You might have included the following:

General public. There is often quite widespread concern about urban development, people worry about the possible adverse effects on a town or city of a proposed development which may in fact benefit them personally. This is sometimes a fear of the unknown: people wonder, for example, what the new place, be it a supermarket or a swimming pool, will look like, whether outsiders will be attracted to the town in question, and what changes will thus be brought about by the development.

In this instance, good PR can inform the general public to avoid fear of the unknown, and to present the benefits to the city.

Local residents. Local residents are a group within the general public whose particular needs must be addressed sensitively. Good PR can be an effective method of reassuring local residents that the development is of positive benefit to them, and of addressing any potential problem issues, for example, fears of car parking problems or increased traffic, before they become contentious.

Conservation groups. These are significant groups, with their own 'PR machines' which may work fast and effectively against you, if you fail to reassure them on issues of concern to them, such as whether or not the centre design will harmonise with the city's traditional architecture.

Local retailers. Local retailers, particularly those with small businesses, will question the impact on their trade of a large leisure centre, which may perhaps even include some retail. Good PR in the fullest sense – including a positive effort to strike up good relations with members of this group, and the provision of adequate information about the scheme – is undoubtedly important. Firstly to reassure them that shopping traffic will not be adversely affected, and secondly to gain the support of this influential element of the local community.

Local councillors. The success of the planning application depends upon the local planning department's favourable view of the proposed development. Good PR is thus essential: local councillors need to be fully informed, so that they can all see the benefits of the development to the city, its visitors and its residents.

Local sports clubs. Like local retailers, this is a group that may fear a potential threat to their trade in the form of the new centre. Through good public relations, such fears can be allayed where they are not justified, and by cultivating good working relationships with these groups it may be possible to demonstrate the benefits of the centre, in terms of complimentary facilities and the like, and persuade them to support the project.

PR techniques for getting messages over to appropriate audiences are less straight forward than other marketing methods, and their successful implementation may depend upon a number of individuals within the organisation not just the person responsible for sales and marketing.

PR techniques include:

- developing good media relations, which can be initiated by the effective circulation of press releases and the organisation of facility visits
- holding public meetings
- fostering good relations with key institutions and representative bodies
- exhibitions: trade and public
- sponsorship.

Good PR also includes the training of staff in the efficient handling of enquiries and complaints.

List below the job titles of those members of your staff who might be asked questions about your leisure facilities, and/or have to deal with complaints.

As well as the 'front-line' members of staff such as:

- receptionists
- bar and restaurant staff
- pool attendants
- coaches and instructors

did you also mention the staff who may have contact with customers in the course of their duties? For instance:

- cleaners
- maintenance staff
- engineers
- administration staff.

Now list the sort of information your customers should be able to get from a member of your staff.

- Times of opening
- Local transport/parking
- What facilities are available
- Is there a jacuzzi?
- How deep is the pool?
- How busy does the club get? When are the quietest times?
- Are there any facilities for health assessment?
- Are there special times for children?
- Are there changing facilities for babies? Is there a crèche?
- Are there facilities for disabled people?
- What is the cost of membership?
- Is there a good atmosphere?

Did you consider how, by answering customers' questions thoughtfully, your staff could help sell your leisure facilities? For example:

- offering to show them around
- asking them what their special interests are, so that these facilities could be pointed out
- introducing them to instructors and other staff
- explaining about any medical checks or health screening which is required before use of certain facilities
- giving them a leaflet with all the information on facilities available and terms and conditions
- taking their name and address so that they can be added to the mailing list

> There is more information on the role staff can play in selling in *Customer Care Management*, and in the Mastercraft book *Customercraft: Keeping the Customers Satisfied*.

MEDIA RELATIONS

'Media relations' refers simply to your relationship with those who write or prepare material for newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and trade publications. The aim of cultivating journalists and editors is to see favourable coverage of your product in publications, on television or radio.

The main method of generating media coverage is via the news release, or 'press release'. The media are receptive to news and pictures about subjects that are topical, unusual, humorous, dramatic and have human interest.

Your new product may strike you as most unusual, and you may hope that it will strike your customers as most unusual, but if you want to interest a journalist, who may receive dozens, even hundreds, of releases about new and different products, new and exciting enterprises, you must make your press release as interesting and readable as possible.

Hints for writing a press release

- Use a bold headline to indicate what it is: a press release!
- Show who it is from: your logo, address and telephone number should feature prominently.
- Give the date of the release, and also indicate clearly if there is any embargo on its use, that is any date before which it should not be published.
- Write a heading which conveys the essence of the story in a few words.
- Keep the main body of the release as concise as possible, covering the questions *what, where, who, how, when and why.*
- Get the main details over in the first paragraph so that a busy editor can understand the gist immediately.
- Use quotes carefully and sparingly.
- Respect copy deadlines. For some magazines the copy deadline will be some weeks in advance of publication.
- Give full details at the end of a contact person and his or her telephone number in case of requests for more information.
- Essentially, keep it short and simple.

Do your research about who writes what in what publication before you circulate your press release. If it does not reach the right desk shortly after you send it, it risks being put aside as 'yesterday's news'.

Follow up the press release with a telephone call, and be ready to be interviewed over the telephone, and do not say anything which you would not wish to read in print! At this stage you may offer further written information or pictures, or an invitation to visit, if the journalist is interested in your 'story'.

Consider the merit of tailoring your press release to the interest of the publication, if you have the time and resources to do so. You might, for example, send a more detailed release to a local newspaper than to a national one, because the local one would have a greater interest and could devote more space to a local leisure product.

Remember the importance of visual images in advertising and promotional literature. It may be appropriate to accompany your press release with a 5" x 4" black and white photograph of your leisure product, for the publication to reproduce alongside its article. Some magazines will want a colour photograph. Big stories justify the paper or television station sending out their own camera crew, of course.

Remember poor photographs look even worse when they are printed, so spend some time thinking about the best photograph to use, and brief your photographer carefully. Colour photographs do not reproduce well in black and white, so if you are not sure what the magazine's preference will be, ask the photographer to take both black and white and colour. It won't cost much more.

Educational or facility visits enable journalists to try out your leisure product, be it a holiday, a hotel, a restaurant or a health club, and this can result in complimentary feature articles, assuming that the product is good! Such visits can be organised on an individual basis, giving you the opportunity to build a good ongoing relationship with a particular journalist, or as press visits. Do not overlook the importance of having information to hand to give to the visiting press, so that if they do go away and write about your product, they have the necessary reference material to ensure that they get the basic facts, such as prices, right!

Because media comment is regarded as independent, it is more credible than advertising. The TV programme *Wish you were here* is a good example of how media comment can benefit leisure companies. Holidays featured in the programme generally sell very well.

Check your weekend newspapers for news stories or editorial features about leisure activities. List below the subjects covered.

Now make a list of topics that could be used for news releases about your own establishment.

TRAVEL TRADE RELATIONS

The travel trade is divided into two main sections:

- *principals*: companies that supply or package tourism products for sale
- *travel agents*: retailers who sell the principals' products to the public.

The Association of British Travel Agents – ABTA – is the representative body for principals and agents.

Principals include airlines, railways, coach operators, car rental firms, cruise lines, ferries, hotels, holiday centres, tour operators, accommodation agencies.

Tour operators like Thomson and Intasun supply holidays which 'package' together travel and accommodation.

Accommodation agencies like Hoseasons act as wholesalers of individual holiday properties.

There are over 6000 retail travel agents in the UK. The trade is dominated by multiple chains such as Thomas Cook, Lunn Poly, Pickfords and Hogg Robinson, each of which has over 300 branches. The role of the travel agent is to stock and distribute brochures supplied by the principals, inform and advise customers about tourism products and make bookings for them.

Travel agents receive commission income from the principals, usually 10% of the value of the bookings they make. As the name implies, travel agents sell travel and holiday-related products. Most of their business is overseas holidays and air tickets, which together account for 80% of sales income and are booked mainly through computerised reservation systems. Less than 10% of holidays taken by the British in Britain are booked through agents.

The advantage of travel agents is their wide coverage of holiday customers through high street outlets. However, selling through agents is not generally cost-effective for small operators because of the quantity of brochures required, the difficulty of getting brochure rack space and the competition from the major companies.

Individual holiday centres, hotels or cottages can do better by working with accommodation agencies – like Hoseasons or Blakes, and package tour operators like Superbreaks or Rainbow – which have good travel agency distribution for their brochures.

Check the holiday advertisements in your weekend newspapers to see which invite direct enquiries and which ask you to obtain a brochure through your local ABTA travel agent. List the companies involved below.

Direct enquiries	*Through ABTA travel agent*

Now visit your local ABTA travel agent and check which British holiday brochures are on display. Mark off on your list above those that correspond with your advertisement review, and add the remainder to the end of your list in the travel agent column.

Ask the same travel agent (Agent A) to recommend an operator in two of the following categories. Then visit two other agents (Agent B and Agent C), asking the same question, but for two different categories. (The object is to compare services across a range of products.) Record below what holiday categories you asked about at each of the travel agents, and how your enquiry was dealt with.

Holiday category	*Agent A*	*Agent B*	*Agent C*
1. A sun, sea and sand holiday in Greece			
2. A self-catering holiday in France			
3. A caravan holiday in the UK			
4. A weekend activity break in the UK			
5. A sightseeing holiday in Europe			
6. A seat-only charter flight to Southern Spain			
Did the agent check the following:			
a) how much you wanted to spend			
b) for how long, and when you wanted to go			
c) whether you wanted lots of entertainment or just peace and quiet			
d) who would be in your party			
Did the agent:			
a) give you relevant brochures			
b) make a specific recommendation			
c) offer to check availability of rooms/ seats			
d) invite you to leave name/address/ telephone number for follow up advice.			
Other comments:			

These exercises should have demonstrated the role of the travel agent, and given you an opportunity to observe the marketing skills of different local agents.

This completes Section 6. The next section, the last of this self-study unit, explains how to bring together all the marketing activities in a marketing plan.

SECTION 7
Marketing planning

After completing this section you will be able to:

prepare a marketing plan.

Marketing is a process of investigation, analysis, planning and then implementing by means of the most effective techniques and combinations of techniques for your particular product, given your budget and resources.

The first section of this unit, which set out to define 'marketing', outlined a checklist of questions to be answered. The following sections took you through them and introduced you to the tools and techniques that are used in the 'marketing mix'.

It is important to formalise the analysis and planning in a written plan. This provides a framework, a discipline for decision-making and a useful reference when you are deeply involved with the mechanics of implementation, and need to set your thoughts in order by looking back at a clear statement of objectives. This written plan does not have to be a long and wordy document. All that is required is a statement of the key facts, objectives, strategies and budgets. These should be quantified where possible, so that performance can be measured.

Outline of a marketing plan

Business objectives

What the business must achieve by means of the marketing programme, in terms of, for example, increased turnover, profit and return on investment.

Market review

A summary of the key facts and assumptions about the market, on which the plan is based. This should include the SWOT analysis.

Marketing objectives

What you want to achieve, for example:

- increase customer numbers by X%
- increase repeat business by Y%
- raise average booking value by Z%.

Marketing strategy

How you are going to achieve your marketing objectives by, for example:

- improving the product
- raising prices
- advertising in new areas
- promoting off-peak periods
- promoting to previous customers.

Marketing activity

A statement of objectives and strategy for each element in the marketing mix:

- product development (building in the USP and so forth)
- pricing
- advertising
- media
- direct marketing
- sales promotion
- public relations
- staff customer care training
- trade relations
- research.

Marketing budget

Planned expenditure for each marketing activity.

SETTING BUDGETS

Marketing budgets are usually quoted as a percentage of product turnover, but there is no standard yardstick of what should be spent. The campaign needed to achieve the marketing objectives has to be costed in detail. Marketing expenditure is an investment in building a business, just like capital spent on new accommodation or leisure equipment, and you have to estimate the likely return.

For example, if you are debating whether to upgrade your promotional literature from black and white to full colour, calculate how many additional customers will be needed over the period of use of the literature to cover the extra cost. Then estimate the probability of getting that volume of extra business. If there is a large sum involved, consider whether you can do any testing to reduce the uncertainty and risk.

As you read the case study that follows, imagine you have responsibility for planning the pre-opening and marketing publicity for the Crest Sensations Leisure Club. It is now December and the club is due to open at the end of March. Note your ideas on page 91.

Case Study: Crest Sensations Leisure Club, Gloucester

Situated in the heart of the Cotswolds, the Gloucester Crest Hotel is eight years old. 30 bedrooms are due to be added, bringing the total to 130. There are plans to improve some of the public areas, and a snooker table will form the main feature in a new bar.

The Crest is just 2 1/2 miles from Gloucester city centre, 5 miles from Cheltenham, and convenient for the M5 motorway.

The leisure club is being built on the site of what was a little used 9 hole pitch and putt course. Access will be via a corridor off the main hotel lobby. The facilities will include:

- *indoor 15 m x 8 m deck level pool, with double doors opening out on a terrace – the whole area will be very attractive, with a bright and sunny aspect*
- *children's pool*
- *outdoor children's play area*
- *spa pool*
- *8-station gym*
- *saunas*
- *steam room*
- *2 solariums*

Coffee and soft drinks will be served in the club's reception area. There will also be a small display of sports clothing on sale.

The club will be open every day from 7 am to 10 pm. All children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult, and children will not be allowed into the club after 7.30 pm.

Towels will be provided free of charge.

Club membership will be available to the local community at an annual fee of £250 single and £350 couple.

The club is expected to be used by 90 people per day, on average, with between 140 and 220 at busy times, such as the Easter holidays.

The main categories of hotel guests are:

- *business*
- *families (mostly on Welcome Breaks)*
- *conference (the hotel has extensive conference facilities).*

There is not expected to be any conflict between the needs of hotel guests and club members. All club members will have an induction before they use the gym for the first time, and where possible, so will hotel guests.

The leisure club is not intended to be a sports or health centre, but an area where hotel guests and club members will be able to relax and enjoy themselves. Of course, those who wish, will be able to have a good workout.

There are several other leisure clubs within a 10 mile radius of the hotel, and the Golden Valley Hotel, only 1 mile away, is also in the process of adding leisure facilities.

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

This is what the hotel decided to do:

DECEMBER

- Stickers on all outgoing correspondence.
- 1000 A4 flyers inserted into newspapers delivered by Merretts in the Gloucester and Cirencester areas.

JANUARY

- A4 flyers inserted into newspapers delivered in Cheltenham.
- Repeat of the A4 flyer insertion into newspapers in the Gloucester area.
- Front page advertisement for local membership in local evening paper, and in Cheltenham paper.

FEBRUARY

- Repeat of local paper adverts.
- Advert for corporate membership in the 'Manager's Journal', a free circulation magazine which goes to directors of all local business houses in Gloucestershire.
- Personal letter sent to managing directors of local business houses, inviting them to a private preview of the centre's facilities.
- Follow-up telephone call to managing directors.
- All respondents to advertisement and leaflet campaigns invited to one of several open days to see the centre's facilities. Drinks and light refreshments to be provided.

MARCH

- Corporate membership advert placed in 'Industrial Gloucester'.
- Contra deal to be agreed with Severn Sound Radio: in exchange for advertising on the station, free conference/meeting facilities provided for next shareholder's meeting.
- Editorial feature in local paper, supported by advertisements taken by contractors involved in the construction of the leisure centre, equipment suppliers and hotel suppliers.
- Local MP to open leisure centre. Mayor of Gloucester and other civic dignitaries to attend.

On this page prepare a concise statement of the market review, marketing objectives and strategy for developing or extending the leisure potential of your own establishment.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

You want to be sure that the marketing objectives and strategies you adopt today are pointing in the right direction and will pay off over the next three to five years. In order to do this, you need to take account of trends that may affect demand for your product and plan how to adapt to them. For example, will your business be affected by the fall in the number of 20-24 year-olds over the next ten years? Bear in mind that it can take years for a marketing strategy to work to the full. Will your strategy be right in three years' time?

List below the SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS that you consider most significant for the leisure industry. (You may wish to refer back to The Leisure Experience.*)*

Now describe below the marketing objectives and strategies that could be adopted to meet those trends by either HEALTH CLUBS or HOLIDAY CENTRES.

Your answers may have included the following.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

- Growth in the number of young children and older people.
- Decline in the number of 18-25 year-olds.
- Growth in disposable income available for leisure spending.
- Concern about 'green' issues: conservation, pollution, traffic congestion.
- Interest in personal health, organic products, natural remedies.
- The growth of the European 'idea' with the opening of the Channel Tunnel.

HEALTH CLUBS

Marketing objectives

- Increase membership among families, young children, middle-aged and retired people.

Marketing strategies

- Install creches to attract women with young children.
- Introduce exercise classes for older people.
- Introduce 'personally tailored' fitness courses for senior business people.
- Introduce family membership schemes.
- Introduce senior citizens discounts for off-peak hours.

All the above are 'product development' strategies. They would need to be supported by the appropriate promotion to bring the improved product to the attention of the relevant sector of the market.

Creches might be advertised by notices appropriately positioned within the premises; exercise classes for older people and personally tailored fitness courses might also be advertised on club notice boards, or promoted by sending details to appropriately selected club members, perhaps with 'sales promotion' offers for introducing new members or booking several classes in advance. Family membership schemes and senior citizen discounts would also be particularly suited to sales promotion, which should always be combined with a longer term marketing technique, and you now know of many from which to select the most effective!

HOLIDAY CENTRES

Marketing objectives

- Increase bookings from young families, middle-aged and retired people and European visitors.
- Extend the holiday season.

Marketing strategies

- Introduce creches and child-minding facilities.
- Introduce early and late season special interest breaks.
- Introduce children and grandparent discount package.
- Liaise with Channel transport operators to promote in Europe.

Once again, a number of these marketing strategies are to do with 'product development'. Other marketing techniques will have to be used to promote the product to the relevant sector of the market.

It's important that you bear in mind how the various techniques interact when you plan an overall marketing campaign.

For more details on managing and promoting accommodation operations see the *Accommodation Management* self-study units:

- ***Accommodation Management*** **This unit will help accommodation managers in what can be a juggling act: achieving a balance between the day-to-day running of the premises and planning for the future.**
- ***Space Management*** **Through better planning and more effective utilisation of space, managers can contribute a great deal to the profitability of their organisation or company.**
- ***Maximising Occupancy*** **This unit covers the basic framework for analysis of current occupancy and for identifying ways of improving it on both a long term and day-to-day basis. A major section is devoted to setting up a reservations control system.**